

# Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

Federalism Commission  
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# All Agriculture is Important

## *Envision Utah 2014*

“Utah does not produce enough food to sustain itself. Currently, the state produces 3% of its fruit needs, 2% of its vegetable needs, and around 25% of its dairy needs.

Utahns want to significantly improve their self-sufficiency and food security by growing more food locally. Utahns believe that eating more locally grown food will also be healthier for them and their families.”



# Small Farms ARE Utah Agriculture

USDA definition- small family farm gross cash farm income (GCFI) less than \$ 350,000

## UDAF 2022 Annual Report

- 2017- of 18,409 farms in Utah ,11,435 (62%) are less than 50 acres
- 2021 of 17,900 farms total in Utah 93% or 16,700 of those had sales of less than \$250,000 with 11,000 under 10,000

These small farms provide a significant livelihood for many Utahns. Without them we would be much less food secure. Agriculture provides beautiful open space and is the most productive and efficient use of these small parcels of land.





# Why Else are Small Farms Critical?

- Small farms provide opportunities for new and young agricultural producers (the average age of a Utah farmer is 56)
- Small farms in urban areas help the public see the value and importance of agriculture and are more likely to sell directly to consumers-connecting Utahns with their food
- Small farms can often innovate in ways that large farms cannot- through many of our programs we see small farmers implementing more environmentally smart practices

**Without small farms we lose food security, opportunity, innovation, connection**

# Soil Health Program

Mission: to improve Utah's soils and increase the state's agricultural productivity through increasing the adoption of soil health practices that focus on increasing soil health through increasing carbon and nutrient cycling, building soil structure, and improving water holding capacity and infiltration.

To accomplish this mission the program has two main program components.

1. Utah Soil Health Network – On-Farm Soil Health Demonstration CIG Grant.
  - a. 16 On-Farm demonstration sites – 5-year Study. Looking at the impact of soil health practices on crop productivity, economics, and environment. **Over 50% of the participants are small farms.**
2. Technical Assistance – In-Field Assessment and Soil Health Plan
  - a. Providing technical assistance about soil health to any landowner in Utah that utilizes a series of simple tests to determine the current health of the soil and identify concerns.
  - b. Since the inception of this program in Oct 2022, **over 78 small farming operations have requested technical assistance.**

The soil health program sees some of the greatest interest in these practices from the small farms across the state.





# Grazing Improvement Program

The Goal of the GIP program is to improve productivity, health, and sustainability of our rangelands and watersheds through providing cost share grants of up to \$200,000 to ranchers to help them make rangeland improvements. GIP has a funding pool where ranchers of 75 animal units or less compete separately for smaller 10,000 grants.

## USDA Climate Smart Commodities Grant

GIP Funding (\$2,022,925)

Climate-smart Practice Implementation (\$1,100,000): to use over 5 years as cost-share funds for implementation of climate-smart practices.

Rancher incentives (\$900,000): to encourage producers to participate in climate-smart practice implementation and help them learn how to lower the transaction costs of selling climate-smart livestock.

New Rancher climate-smart practices workshop (\$22,925): The Beginning Rancher Workshop will be a co-hosted event by GIP and Working Lands Conservation

UDAF Funding (\$376,526)

Full-time Marketing Position: focused on marketing and promotion of climate-smart beef.



# Agri Park

UDAF has supported the Six County Association of Governments in their efforts to build the state's first Agri-Park south of Nephi, UT. The goal for the Agri-Park is to have infrastructure and permitting in place to **provide new opportunities for small to medium sized agricultural producers and processors.**

We see an Agri-Park as a processing facility for all types of agricultural products as well as a type of food hub to allow producers throughout the state to access large institutional customers.

A feasibility study was recently completed on the project. The project also received \$8 million of one-time funding during the 2023 legislative session.





# Food Security Processing Grant Program

During the 2022 General Legislative Session, the Department was awarded \$1 million of funding for the Food Security Pilot Program. The goal of the program is to increase processing capacity for local agricultural products in the state. **Processors must have less than 100 employees to be eligible.**

The program was a huge success. We received 78 applications requesting over \$14,000,000 of funding to expand existing or build new processing facilities. Most grantees have now spent grant funds to purchase equipment that is already increasing their processing capacity.

We received an additional \$1 million of funding during the 2023 session. The application period just closed at the end of May and we received 88 applications this time around with over \$10 million requested.



# Utah's Own

Utah's Own goal is to promote locally produced products of agriculture. As a voluntary, opt-in program, local businesses pay a small annual fee to become a member.

- 338 members. Members receive product promotion and marketing, industry partnerships and resources, an online business profile, and use of the trademarked Utah's Own logo.
- The vast majority of Utah's own farms are small farms.
- Utah's Own currently supports 13 CSA farms in the nine counties- .5 acres to 50 acres
- Utah's Own supports 11 farms and ranchers that provide consumers with farmstead meat:
  - Several of these ranches are highly engaged in conservation and regenerative farming efforts; Canyon Meadows Ranch was recently awarded the Leopold Conservation Award. This award is given to private landowners dedicated to leaving their land better than how they found it.

# Conservation Division Programs

ARDL and Rural Rehab loan programs , LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Fund, Agriculture Water Optimization Program - all help both small and large farms

AG VIP Program- provides incentive programs to help producers implement nutrient management plans and protect water quality

- Between 2020-2022- 125 contracts, 25 are small farms (20%)
- In 2023 Ag VIP created additional incentives for small farms- regular incentive is \$1,000 plus \$12/acre each year for 3 years. New incentive ensures that producers receive a minimum payment each year of \$1,000-increasing the yearly payment for anyone with 83 acres or less.

The pollinator program that provides pollinator friendly plants statewide free of charge almost exclusively benefits small farms:

- Last year the program received 326 applicants
- We are currently accepting applications and will through June 19th.
- Program participants have to install a minimum of 900 square feet of pollinator habitat

